

User Guide

Submit a Proposal

1. Learn about the Molecular Foundry and its user program

Before submitting your proposal, orient yourself to the Foundry's resources and capabilities, and learn about the User Program.

The Molecular Foundry accepts standard user proposals twice annually. Proposals are reviewed by an external board of subject-matter experts for scientific merit and feasibility. Successful proposals can be started at any time and last for a maximum of one year. Learn more about the review process and about other, less common modes of user engagement on the [User Policy](#) page.

User projects at the Foundry vary in size and scope, and the program accommodates both short-term and long-term collaborative research projects. The program is open to users from academia, the private sector, and research institutes worldwide. Users join a vibrant research community that brings together Foundry research staff, technical support staff, students, postdoctoral fellows, and collaborating guest scientists.

The Molecular Foundry is organized into seven interdependent research Facilities, which span nanoscience topics in synthesis, characterization, and theory. In 2014, the neighboring [National Center for Electron Microscopy](#) became part of the Foundry, dramatically expanding the resources available to users. Through a peer-reviewed proposal system, a user can request access to one or several facilities. Learn about the seven Foundry facilities, their capabilities and their staff, on the [facility pages](#).

2. Explore Foundry capabilities and plan your proposal

Start by determining which Facilities are required for your project. You can learn about our research Facilities on the [Facility pages](#) and read about their staff expertise and available equipment. You must identify a single "lead" Facility, where you will do the majority of your work. You may also identify "support" Facilities if you need additional instruments or expertise that are not found in the lead Facility.

You are encouraged to [contact Foundry scientists and technical staff](#) to discuss the feasibility and scope of your proposed project. Staff members can help you understand the Foundry's capabilities and provide guidance in putting together your proposal.

3. Prepare responses to proposal questions

Prepare responses to the six proposal questions, keeping in mind the review criteria for each. The questions and criteria are given in the [User Policy](#). Figures can be included when entering your responses in the proposal form.

You are encouraged to [contact Foundry scientists and technical staff](#) to discuss the feasibility and scope of your proposed project. Staff members can help you understand the Foundry's capabilities and provide guidance in putting together your proposal.

4. Create and submit your proposal through the online proposal portal

If you are a new user, create a user profile on the [proposal submission portal](#). The portal also gives you access to your past and current proposals.

[Log in to the portal](#) and complete the proposal form. You can save the proposal form before submitting and return to it later, if needed.

Submit the proposal form. You will be asked to review your proposal for completeness before submitting. When ready, click the 'submit proposal now' bar at the bottom of the last page.

You will receive a confirmation email that your proposal was received.

After your project is approved

Users who will not work onsite at the Foundry do not need to do these steps.

5. Complete secondary safety screening (except NCEM users)

Once your project has been approved, one member of your user team must submit more detailed safety information in the Tier II EHS forms. These forms must be evaluated and approved before you can begin work at the Foundry. To complete the Tier II EHS forms, [log in to the proposal portal](#) and locate a link to the right of your proposal title. The instructions for completing the forms are also given in your approval email.

6. Become a badged LBNL "affiliate"

All users who will be at the Foundry for more than five business days during the course of your Foundry project must become LBNL "affiliates" (also known as "guests"). By becoming an affiliate, these users will be issued an LBNL identification badge giving them access to the lab, and an LBNL login identity known as an "LDAP". To initiate the affiliate process, contact the Molecular Foundry's affiliate processing (tmfaffiliate@lbl.gov). Users will be contacted by the affiliate office two weeks before their arrival date with badge information.

Users who will be at the Foundry for fewer than five business days do not need to become badged affiliates. In this case, your assigned scientist will arrange for your visit with the LBNL security office.

7. Contact your assigned Foundry scientist

Once your proposal is approved, a Foundry scientist will be assigned to your project; he or she will be your primary contact at the Foundry. Contact your assigned scientist, named in your acceptance email, to discuss the logistics of your project and your arrival date. If your safety training can be done remotely, your assigned scientist will initiate that process at this time.

When you arrive

Users who will not work onsite at the Foundry do not need to do these steps.

8. Go to your appointment with the Affiliate Office to collect your badge

If you will be at the Foundry for more than five business days, you will have previously initiated the affiliate process. The Affiliate Office will contact you two weeks prior to your arrival with appointment details. Attend this appointment to collect your badge.

9. Sign in with the Molecular Foundry User Office

Visit the Foundry's user office on the third floor of Building 67 to sign in.

10. Meet with your assigned staff scientist

Meet with your assigned staff scientist, who will help orient you to the building and will discuss your safety training and lab access.

11. Complete safety training

Users who will work at the Foundry must be entered into the Berkeley Lab [Work Planning and Control](#) system (WPC) and complete any required on line training via the [Berkeley Lab Training site](#) before performing any laboratory work. Your assigned staff scientist will initiate the WPC process and discuss specific training requirements with you. Additional, in-person and on-the-job, training must be completed according to your assigned WPC Activities' requirements.

12. Complete instrument qualification (NCEM users only)

New NCEM users should contact their assigned scientist and arrange for the necessary instrument qualification sessions. Instrument instruction will include a demonstration of specific instrument characteristics and will depend on the experience of the user and the goals of the proposed work. Each user must then take a "driving test" on the instrument to become a qualified user. Different levels of access apply based on demonstration of competence and discretion of NCEM staff responsible for instrumentation. Some instruments might require a separate driving test for each instrument subcomponent (such as different in situ holders).

Instrument driving tests may be [viewed here](#).

After your proposal is completed

13. Sign out with your assigned scientist

When you have completed your on-site work, you must sign out with your assigned scientist. He or she will go over any samples or data that need to be saved or shipped, and verify that all work areas/equipment used are clean and functional.

14. Return your badge and sign out with the User Office

Before going home, return your badge to the Foundry User Office and sign out. If you leave after hours, please leave your badge with your assigned scientist and send a sign-out notice to the user office at <mailto:foundry-useroffice@lbl.gov>.

15. Submit a final project report

Users are required to submit a Final Project Report within 30 days of completing their project. This report is necessary for any subsequent proposal submission by the same user. A detailed discussion of the project along with a list of the resulting publications or patents is required.

16. Acknowledge Foundry support in published work

All published work resulting from use of this facility must carry the following acknowledgment, regardless of whether Foundry staff are included as authors:

Work at the Molecular Foundry was supported by the Office of Science, Office of Basic Energy Sciences, of the U.S. Department of Energy under Contract No. DE-AC02-05CH11231.

Please be aware that proper acknowledgement of Foundry resources is crucial to our continued support. For more complex funding combinations, refer to the [Materials Sciences Division website](#).

It is expected that all user project results of sufficient scientific merit will be prepared for publication and submitted to a journal. Any Foundry scientist who made significant contributions should be included as an author and will expect to review the paper before its submission to a journal.

17. Report publications and awards to the user office

[Notify our User Office](#) of your publications, awards, or other research outcomes resulting from your Foundry project. This allows us to track the success of our program and is important to our continued support.